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11 May 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

FROM:

[redacted]
Chief, Planning Staff

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SUBJECT:

Minutes of the First Meeting of the
Steering Group on Personnel

1. The first meeting of the Steering Group on Personnel took place on 7 May 1984 from 1610 to 1710 hours in Room 7D64. All members were present:

[redacted] Executive Director (Chairman)
Mr. Richard Kerr, ADDI

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[redacted] ADDO

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Mr. James Hirsch, ADDS&T
Mr. James McDonald, ADDA
Mr. Robert Magee, D/Pers

Also present were [redacted] EA/ExDir and the undersigned.

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2. [redacted] opened the meeting by stressing the long-term, critical nature of our manpower concerns, quoting for this purpose from the first goal in the Agency's Strategic Plan for 1982-1992. He then asked Mr. Magee to comment on the manpower issues raised in the Addendum to the Strategic Plan and on responses to the excellence exercise.

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3. Mr. Magee said the Agency is still attracting an adequate number of good quality applicants. He said the problem is getting them through the processing system more quickly. He voiced confidence that we will continue to have enough high quality applicants from which to choose in the coming years. He said he does not anticipate the need for startling new initiatives in the recruitment area. Noting we compete for recruits with firms such as Chase Manhattan and Draper Industries, Mr Magee said we will need to experiment with meeting the competition. He said it may simply become a question of dollars and cents. Mr. Magee concluded by stating that there is some action on the excellence initiatives but that he would have more feedback from his staff in two weeks. He opined that employees were generally cynical about the excellence exercise, that they were passively waiting to say it did not work instead of actively trying to make it work. Mr. Kerr agreed with the last statement.

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4. [] then described the three-phased study called for 25X1 in the Addendum and outlined his concept of how the Steering Group would operate, e.g., the Group would not involve itself in micromanagement of the Director of Personnel's efforts; it would probably meet only about three times in 1984 to review progress on the actions called for in the Addendum.

5. [] then called for discussion of the proposed 25X1 study.

- Mr. Magee questioned whether the three-phased study was a good idea.

- Mr. Hirsch noted that the study called for in the Addendum seemed to emphasize recruitment and training rather than retention of employees which he felt to be very important. He said quality of life is really the key to retaining good employees, not simply money. He also cited esprit, élan, and the mystique of working for the Agency as important factors.

- Mr. Magee agreed with Mr. Hirsch and noted that the advertisements currently being run by the Agency are very good because they stress the career aspect of Agency employment which is what people are looking for.

- [] asked if there was doubt that the Agency really 25X1 needed to make projections regarding the mix of skills that would be required in the 1990s. Mr. Hirsch said we should construct scenarios about what positions will be needed in the 1990s. He noted that there will be fewer people in their twenties available then, and the Agency may have to structure itself to do its job with a smaller work force. He said we should try to project what the Agency's organizational issues would be in the 1990s.

- Mr. Hirsch said that forecasting the needed mix of skills would not be hard to do. He said laying the problem out in a coherent fashion helps to focus on interesting issues. As an example, he asked how his Directorate would handle the language problem in the 1990s. Would it use retirees? machine translation? He said it would help to forecast what the market would be in the 1990s. He added that the programs and actions phase of the study should be emphasized and that retention rather than recruitment should be stressed.

- Mr. Magee said his office was now getting better exit interviews to determine why people are leaving. OP has conducted 57 interviews to date. People with high technology specialties are leaving primarily for better benefits.

- [] said that historically people in the S&T area 25X1 seemed to turn over every 7-10 years, that there was not the expectation of a 20-30 year career, and that that was not only not bad, but probably good.

• Mr. Hirsch agreed, noting that this has become a problem in some areas for his Directorate, especially as the Directorate tries to reach out and work with the Operations Directorate abroad. Mr. McDonald noted that his Directorate lost a number of people with high technology specialties because of the amount of external contracting done in the Agency which takes the actual working of problems off the premises. The DDA employees left in many cases to join the consulting firms doing the work.

• [] asked how we motivate and retain employees. 25X1

-- Mr. McDonald said his Directorate has almost gotten completely away from the attraction of its former overseas orientation.

-- Mr. Kerr said the problem is serious in the DDI where the average age is quite young. He said the DDI is becoming less competitive and will have to find ways to retain people. Mr. Kerr noted that people leave because of negative perceptions of the satisfactions to be gained in a twenty-year career. They are not just discouraged by annual salary figures, but by the overall picture, including retirement benefits. He said remuneration is a factor with engineers and technicians.

-- Mr. Hirsch agreed that remuneration is a factor, but not the whole story. He described the remuneration factor as "the straw that broke the camel's back."

• [] noted [] assignment to OTE as part of a deliberate effort to expand and enhance the training curriculum for the future. He asked the Group for their observations about the role of training. 25X1

-- Messrs. Hirsch and [] agreed that training is crucial to our ability to attract and retain good people. 25X1

-- Regarding languages, Mr. Magee said we must train people ourselves. He said the colleges and universities simply do not do a good job of language training. There was general agreement that the Agency and military schools do a creditable job in this area.

-- Mr. Magee said that employees in areas such as OP and Finance do not really know what is being accomplished substantively in the Agency. He said they enjoy the feeling of participation when they are exposed to substantive matters, particularly in the area of operations.

• [] noted that there appeared to be a consensus that something could come of having the Steering Group meet to surface ideas in the personnel area for Mr. Magee's benefit. 25X1

-- Mr. Magee suggested having the Steering Group meet with him just as the Deputy Directors meet with the Comptroller. As an example of a subject for discussion, Mr. Magee suggested standardization of the Honor and Merit Awards program.

-- Mr. Kerr wondered whether such a discussion by the Steering Group would prove useful.

• [] noted that the focus of the meeting had moved from long-range planning to short-term issues; he asked the undersigned if he had anything to add to the discussion of the three-phased study in view of the fact that the Planning Staff had been responsible for producing the Addendum to the Strategic Plan.

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-- I replied that I believed the Steering Group members may have lost sight of the importance of establishing individual and collective answers to the question of what mixes of skills will be needed in the 1990s before proceeding to develop programs and actions to help meet those needs. I noted the first phases of the study could be as elaborate or as brief as they cared to make them. I said I did not believe clear answers to the skills mix and pool of talent questions raised in the Addendum were currently available in the Agency.

-- [] said his Directorate did have the answers and that he did not wish to spend time on long studies instead of taking other appropriate action.

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6. At the conclusion of the meeting, [] tabled the report of the Senior Women's Task Force on Career Opportunities for Women, dated 27 April 1984. He asked the Steering Group members to forward comments on the report to him by close of business 11 May.

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7. The meeting was concluded without providing for the next meeting of the Group.

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